

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty

March 5, 2010

Forty years ago today, in the midst of a cold war, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, becoming the cornerstone of the world's efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. Today, the threat of global nuclear war has passed, but the danger of nuclear proliferation endures, making the basic bargain of the NPT more important than ever: Nations with nuclear weapons will move toward disarmament, nations without nuclear weapons will forsake them, and all nations have an "inalienable right" to peaceful nuclear energy.

Each of these three pillars—disarmament, nonproliferation, and peaceful uses—are central to the vision that I outlined in Prague of stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and seeking a world without them.

To promote disarmament, the United States is working with Russia to complete negotiations on a new START Treaty that will significantly reduce our nuclear arsenals. Our forthcoming Nuclear Posture Review will move beyond outdated cold war thinking and reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, even as we maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. In addition, we will seek to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and negotiate a treaty to end the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons.

To prevent proliferation, we will build on the historic resolution that we achieved at the United Nations Security Council last September by bringing together more than 40 nations at our nuclear security summit next month with the goal of securing the world's vulnerable nuclear materials in 4 years. At this spring's treaty review conference and beyond, we will continue to work with allies and partners to strengthen the NPT and to enforce the rights and responsibilities of every nation, because the world cannot afford additional proliferation or regional arms races.

Finally, to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the United States seeks a new framework for civil nuclear cooperation among nations, including an international fuel bank and the necessary resources and authority to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency. For nations that uphold their responsibilities, peaceful nuclear energy can help unlock advances in medicine, agriculture, and economic development.

It took years of focused effort among many nations to bring the NPT into force four decades ago and to sustain it as the most widely embraced nuclear agreement in history. On this 40th anniversary, the United States reaffirms our resolve to strengthen the nonproliferation regime to meet the challenges of the 21st century as we pursue our ultimate vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

Categories: Statements by the President : Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 40th anniversary.

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